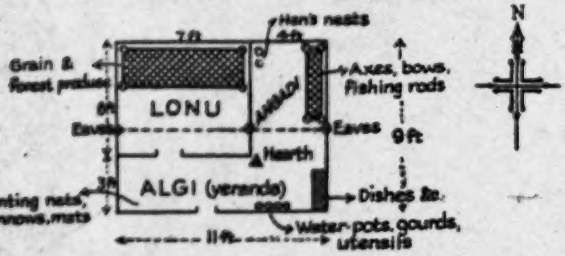
1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria



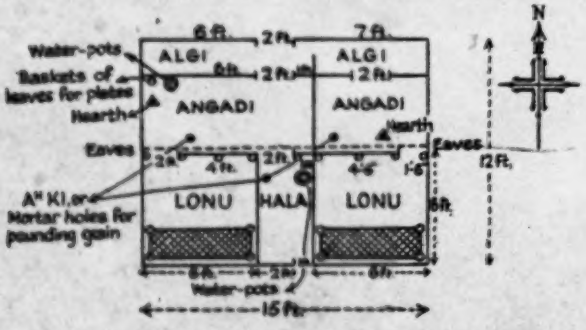
HILL MARIA HOUSES

(a) Nugur, Kutru Mar, Kasyeq-gaita's house, Nov. 1927

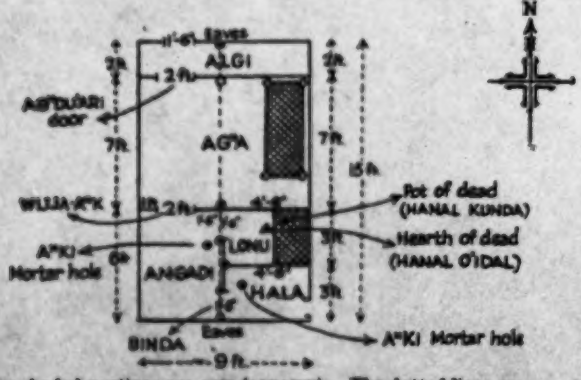
● 342




(b) Kurmer, Chhota Dongar Mar, house of Dedha Keye, wife, 2 children, and extra rooms for widowed mother, Feb. 1930




(c) Handawada, Dantewara Mar, Peda's house, March 1934




The shaded portions are cots (ALPANJI). The dotted lines represent line of roof-tree

FIGURE 7

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria



● 342 Rough ground-plans of three typical Hill Maria houses are given in the illustration on page 111. The Nugur house was the end house of a long-house, and faced south on to the main village street. It differs from the other two in having no partition wall between the veranda (*algi*) and the *angadi*, or women's kitchen and sleeping room; the *angadi* in this case is in fact almost a continuation of the veranda round the eastern side of the *lonu*. The husband actually slept in the veranda and his wife in the *angadi* in warm weather, but in the *lonu* in winter and rains. This house had no *hala* or menstruation room, because the village had a communal menstruation hut; so also the house had no back door.

Houses

The Kurmer house faced north on to the main street, and was the central house of a long-house of three houses; its western and eastern walls were thus only partitions separating it from the other two houses. It was itself almost two houses, as the widowed mother [592] of Dedha Keye, the occupant, had the eastern *algi*, *angadi* and *lonu* for her exclusive use; but there was no door between her portion of the *algi* and Keye's portion, only a partial continuation across the veranda of the partition wall between her and Keye's rooms. The widow was too old to need a *hala*, and so there was only one for Keye's wife in his part of the house, and this had a back door. Like the Nugur house, this house had no *agha* room.

The Handawada secular headman's (*pedā's*) house was at the north end of a long-house containing three houses and facing west on to the village street; the other two houses had their verandas (*algi*) and entrances on the street side, facing west. His *algi* was therefore very small, and only nominally walled off from the open ground to the north of the house by a bamboo wicker-work fence [351] about 3½ feet high, being thus useless for keeping property. Where, as in the other houses illustrated, the veranda is in front of the house and parallel to the roof-tree, it is easy to construct a front wall as high as the roof, which is there barely 3½ feet above the ground.

342 The *agha* is the husband's living and sleeping room, and it is
513 taboo (*polo*) for his wife, a mature daughter or any woman to sleep
784 in it; but boys too small to sleep in the bachelors' dormitory and immature daughters may sleep there. In hot weather the males of the family often sleep under the granary, which is built on piles, and when houses have no *agha* this is the usual sleeping place at all times for the men of the family, and for male guests except when the latter can be accommodated in the village dormitory
342 (*gotal-lon*). It is strictly taboo for any female to enter a granary,
513 or to sleep under one. Every *agha* has a large *alpanji* or sleeping

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria



platform raised above the ground on wooden legs about 3 feet high, and consisting of a rectangular wooden frame from 5 to 7 feet long by from 5 to 3 feet broad; no attempt has been made to draw to scale those shown in the three house plans. On this frame is a framework of criss-cross strips of bamboo bark or *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper cords. In dry weather the father and children sleep on the floor, with possibly a reed sleeping-mat (*masni*) or a bark-cloak (*taghali*) beneath them, and a fire near by; in the rainy season they sleep on the *alpanji* platform, with a fire underneath them. At other times of year it is a convenient shelf for storing baskets and basketry materials, winnows, tools, cords, etc. Where, as in the Kurmer house illustrated, there is no *agha*, the husband may sleep on the floor of the veranda in dry weather, and in wet weather on a sleeping-mat in the *angadi*, while the wife sleeps on the floor of the *lonu*.

The *angadi* is primarily the kitchen and secondarily the sleeping room of the wife and any mature daughter. Besides one or more hearths (*o'idal*) of baked mud, roughly horseshoe shaped, or consisting of three stones, there are one or more mortar holes (*akki*) sunk in the floor and carefully plastered with mud in which grain is pounded with the club-shaped pestle (*uspal*), and numerous pots or gourd bottles of water, supplies of leaves for leaf-plates, bamboo splinters for stitching them together and baskets of all shapes and sizes. It is taboo for mature women to sleep anywhere except on the floor, and so no *alpanji* is provided in *angadi* or *hala* room. Actually the original custom, still followed in some remote villages, seems to have been for all men to sleep in the village dormitory, or at least under their granaries, and not in the house, save in the season when they slept in the fields; for this reason the Kurmer house without any *agha* probably is an older type than the Handawada. At present, except during the season when all males are sleeping in the field houses, married men as well as bachelors sleep in the village dormitory whenever sexual continence has to be observed, e.g. from the night before the sowing of the *penda* fields till the first blades sprout, and before certain ceremonies.[1] The Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife; but the old prejudice is fast dying out.[1]

[1] Russell and Hiralal (article, 'Gond', III, 131-2) write:—'In one part of Bastar they have a curious rule that all males, even the married, must sleep in the common house for the eight months of the open season, while their wives sleep in their own houses. A Maria Gond thinks it impious to have sexual intercourse with his wife in his house, as it would be an insult to the

[see cat. 116, p. 420. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria



The essential features of the *kala* or menstruation room have already been described.

Although also used for storing provisions and goods, the *lonu* room is essentially the room devoted to the Departed (*Hanal*), and is, indeed, often referred to as the *Hanal Kholi*, or Room of the Departed. Here in a corner rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed, which it is taboo for the husband to touch, and in which the housewife deposits a little meal for the departed ancestors whenever she grinds; and here is the *Hanal O'idal*, or the Hearth of the Departed, on which she cooks the first new grain at each of the new grain eating festivals; the ashes of this are never swept away. There is never a back door to the *lonu*. As no space should be wasted, there is always an *alpanji* platform in the *lonu* for storing provisions, especially jungle produce; but it is never slept on, as women only may sleep in the *lonu*, and it is taboo for them to sleep anywhere except on the floor.

The walls of houses are generally made of vertical pole stockading. The side walls are of poles of a uniform height of from 3 to 3½ feet, while the end walls start from this height at the sides and rise to 6 or 7 feet at the centre; the latter at intervals have forked tops to support the horizontal beams parallel to the sides on which the thatched roof rests. There are generally three of these on either side of the central and highest beam, which is the roof-tree. The roof-tree is supported at intervals along its length by other fork-topped poles resting in the ground, generally built into the partitions between the rooms, or serving as posts for the inside doors, and varying accordingly in number. They are shown on the three ground-plans on page 111 in small circles along the dotted line representing the line of the roof-tree; that dotted line in the Kurmer and Handawada plans should correspond with the partitions shown closely parallel to them. The inner partitions, including those dividing one house in a long-house from another,

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goddess of wealth who lives in the house, and the effect would be to drive her away. Their solicitude for this goddess is the more noticeable, as the Maria Gond's house and furniture probably constitute one of the least valuable human habitations on the face of the globe.'

Whoever gave the authors this information must have been drawing on his imagination. There is no 'goddess of wealth' among the Marias. The modern Maria becomes hilarious over the idea that it is in any way wrong to have intercourse with his wife in the house; if any consideration deterred the older generation, it was the close proximity of the *hanal kunda* (Pot of the Departed) in the *lonu* room of the house, so associated with the cult of the *hanal* or Departed.

Dr. Hutton has referred me to the account of the Kadar tribe of Cochin (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. III, p. 214). The Kadar also regard (or used to regard) it as taboo to have sexual intercourse in the house, but husband and wife meet by day at a trysting place in the forest.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria



are made either of similar but lighter pole stockading, or of what the Hill Marias call *tuss*, that is, fencing of grass fastened in vertical bundles between pairs of horizontal bamboo struts, which themselves are fastened at intervals to poles planted in the ground. The floors, walls and partitions are plastered with mud, the walls on the inside, and the partitions on both sides; the women do the plastering, while their men look on. They often do not plaster the veranda wall at all. They sometimes make the side walls of bamboo wattlework instead of pole stockading. They do not char or otherwise treat the bases of the poles before fixing them in the ground. The first post of the house is almost always of the sacred *saja* tree; I have not seen this adorned with bundles of thatching grass in the manner of other Gonds (cf. Russell and Hiralal, III, p. 122), but I have seen two *saja* trees near a house under construction so adorned. The youths sometimes paint the plastered partitions in white with rows of dots, with swastikas like those tattooed on girls' faces (see p. 74 above), or with crude crocodiles or tigers; I have seen women's breasts represented in relief.

The grass (rarely palm) thatch rests on bamboos tied across the roof beams, and is secured against wind by bamboos criss-crossed outside the thatch. The grass generally used is *dab* (*Pollinea argentea*) which appears in the *penda* fields after the first harvest has been reaped, and in the second or third year covers them so thickly that they have to be abandoned. In March, after the harvest has been finished, you will see near all the recently abandoned *penda* clearings extensive *dab* cuttings, the grass being stacked on rough log platforms about a foot and a half above the ground in readiness for re-thatching the houses just before the break of the monsoon. The men re-thatch houses, granaries, pig-sties and temples every year.

The usual form of door is a rectangle of split bamboo wickerwork sliding between two pairs of upright wooden posts. The doorway has often a wicker-work threshold from one to two feet high, over which the sliding door fits. There are always doors in the doorways leading from outside into the veranda, from the veranda to the *angadi*, and at the back of the menstruation room; generally also in the doorways leading into the *loss*; but I have never seen a door in the front doorway of the menstruation room. Sometimes the whole of this room is not taboo to men, the *binda* or mud threshold that marks the limit of the tabooed ground (see p. 106) being constructed across the floor of the room some two feet beyond the front entrance. Occasionally more elaborate doors will be seen, made of a small hewn wooden plank with tangs of wood left

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria



342 projecting about two inches at the top and bottom of the inner edge, to work in the eyes of staples cut out of wood and fastened into the door-post; the other end has a roughly squared strip of wood six inches long, which rests in a slot in the opposite door-post and is fastened to it by a horizontal peg passing through holes in the door-post and the strip of wood.

422 The contents of the Kurmer house represented in ground-plan (b) on page 111 were typical of Hill Maria houses; the list that follows enumerates the contents only of the rooms occupied by Dedha Keye himself, his wife and children; his mother had her own property in her own *angadi* and *lonu* :—

VERANDA

1 sambar horn used as a peg.
1 *taghali* bark overcoat.
4 bundles of firewood.
[824] 1 broom of *phulbehari* (*Thysanolaena agrostis*) grass.

ANGADI

2 earthen cooking pots.
10 gourd ladles.
5 gourds for making bottles.
2 earthen pots full of drinking water.
1 bow.
2 arrows.
3 axes.
1 broken axe.
1 bamboo tobacco tube.
1 pair wooden clogs.
3 small wooden sitting stools.
4 coils of dried *siari* bark for twisting into twine.
1 bundle of peacock's feathers, and 2 cock feathers.
4 *rahing* bamboo and leaf rain-hats.
1 *dala'ino* leaf rain-shield for the back.
3 small iron sickles.
2 baskets of leaves for plates, etc.
29 baskets of various types, mostly empty, but some containing meal grain and forest fruits.

MENSTRUATION ROOM

(a) *Outside the taboo limit*
2 *uspal*, or grain pestles.
2 winnows.
1 shouldered digging iron (*pulu*).
1 *gudari* hoe.
2 arrows.

(b) *Inside the taboo limit*
1 hearth.
1 cooking pot.
1 axe.
1 *uspal*.
2 gourd water-bottles.
1 *phulbehari* broom.
2 bamboo tubes of oil.
8 baskets of different sizes, used for storing food, leaves, etc., when the room is in occupation.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria



343 the wefts are of split bamboo. The corners of the walls are further secured by cords stitched through the two wicker walls round the [283] corner warp and the corner pile. Wherever beams cross, they are lashed with *siari* twine or thicker rope. The door of a single granary is usually a sliding piece of bamboo wicker-work; but in the long granaries it is a section of *tum* grass fence or bamboo wicker-work fastened in position by obliquely crossing bamboos.

251 These granaries contain immense quantities of *kosra* and other hill grains, rice, beans, dried forest fruits, etc., in big bins of bamboo basketry, smaller baskets, and large *chiptis* or lidded boxes of leaves on a framework of cane or twigs. The bins are all lidded with stitched-leaf tops, tied round the rim with creeper cord, like the paper top of an English jam-jar. The Marias store here also dried rolls of tobacco leaves, coils of creeper and other ropes, and gourds of all shapes and sizes for making spoons, ladles and water-bottles; and when they used *moghi* dancing shields and peacock plumes attached to them they used to hang them under the eaves except when they wrapped them in leaves and hung them in the tops of trees.

342 513 The village dormitory, as has been said above, is generally in the centre and at one end of the village street. It is a long-house made with no partitions, surrounded generally with a bamboo wattle-work fence; and it is practically a roofed *alpanji* or sleeping platform, the criss-cross bamboo framework of which covers almost the whole floor at a height of about 2½ feet above the floor. Often it is entered from in front by a door under the highest point of the eaves, to which access is gained by a narrow horizontal gangway of logs raised the same height above the ground as the sleeping platform and extending from the outer fence to the door; persons entering the dormitory climb on to the gangway by a rough stile, consisting of a tree stump set in the ground between two vertical posts which serve as railings. [374] The interior is badly grimed with smoke, as log fires are lit at night under the sleeping platform, the only door is fastened, and there is no window or vent for the escape of smoke. I have never found anything inside a dormitory except two or three drums and occasionally the shrine of the Village Mother.

**The 'gotul-los'**

### *B. Bison-horn Maria Villages, Houses, and their Contents*

361 Of Hill Maria villages the essential thing to remember is that they shift as the cultivation shifts, and so seldom remain more than four or five years in one place. The few villages that have good permanent rice fields tend now to become more or less permanent.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XI

482
142
291
301
415

HILL MARIA WOMEN CARRYING GOURDS OF WATER

HILL MARIA WOMAN CARRYING A LEAF-BOX OF GRAIN

*(Photographs by Baron E. von Eickstedt)*

361
342

BISON-HORN MARIA VILLAGE STREET, TELAM, NEAR KATAKALIAN

[Facing p. 118]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria



361 The villages being permanent in comparison to the Hill Maria villages, they are apt naturally to be considerably dirtier, and this is 364 accentuated by the far larger numbers of cattle and goats that the 177 greater wealth of the Bison-horn Marias enables them to keep. The houses, too, are far dirtier and more smoke-grimed, though in places the Hindu practice of constantly replastering the floors with fresh cow-dung is coming in. They are smaller also, as the spread of cultivation has restricted the available sources of timber and bamboo; but where ample forest is near, the houses are larger, and sleeping sheds for the men as well as cattle byres make individual homesteads appear larger than the homes of the Hill Marias.

● 342 The long-houses of the Hill Marias are never seen in the Bison-
361 horn Maria villages. Individualism is becoming yearly more marked among the Bison-horn Marias, and every man likes to have his own house and property distinct from his brothers and cousins. Their houses, instead of being parallel to the village street are generally at right angles to it, and a double row of houses, one on each side of the street, is often impossible, because the houses are too close to each other to allow each house to have its *bari* (garden enclosure) behind it, so that some householders (like those of houses B and E in the rough sketch of part of Telam village on page [351] 121) must have their *bari* opposite them across the street. Each *bari* is fenced right round with bamboo wattle-work, so that the fences of the *baris* opposite the line of houses appear like a continuous wattle-work wall along one side of the street. But there may be in the middle of the street occasional granaries or other buildings, and the houses are often irregularly scattered about with no pretence of formal alignment, so that the ordered arrangement of a Hill Maria village is completely absent. There are as many [231] pig-sties in Bison-horn as in Hill Maria villages, but they are far less elaborately and adequately constructed, though protected, like the Hill Maria sties, by leaning thatches from the sun.

361 The houses of the clan that founded the village are usually all together in one group, and there are separate groups for each of the clans with which it intermarries.

343 There appears to be no common menstruation hut among
841 the Bison-horn Marias, nor, indeed, any special menstruation room in their houses. A special hut or booth is erected near the house for the delivery of a child, and in a few villages near the borders of the Hill Maria country there is a hut called the *Piki-kurma* for each group of houses, where apparently young girls are segregated for their first menstruation; but I noted that I might have misunderstood the information that I was given about this hut, and in villages in the heart of the Bison-horn country was definitely told

[text continues on p. 122]

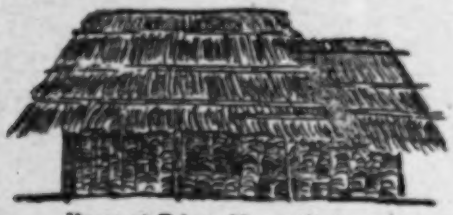
1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

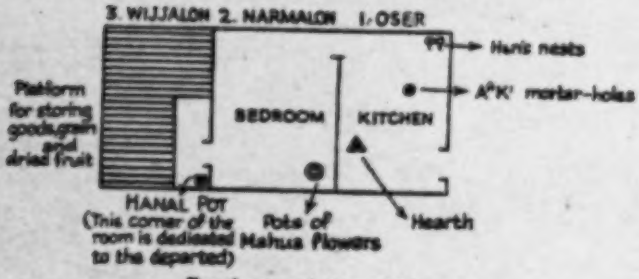
PLATE XII

BISON-HORN MARIA VILLAGE AND HOUSE

342

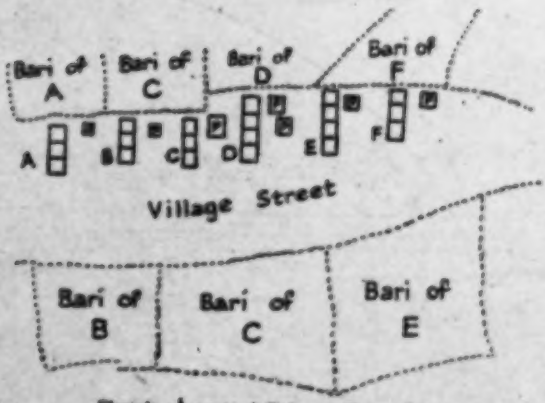


House at Telam, May 11th, 1930.




Rough ground-plan of house.

361




Sketch of part of Telam village street.

KEY

P = Pig-sty  H = House

—— = Bamboo wattlework fence

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria



that there was no custom of segregating menstruating girls or women.

There is in every Bison-horn village a *paik-gotul* or lodging-hut for State officials, but I have never seen a *gotul-lon* dormitory for bachelors. I was once told that there are such dormitories in a few big villages such as Ghotpal, Karli, Tumnar, Massenar and Dugeli, but could not find one in these villages; nor did the State officials who gathered information for me in various parts of the Bison-horn country ever report their existence. The *pedas* (headmen) and *permas* (village priests) whom I saw at Aranpur and other camps stated that such dormitories were a degraded institution found only among Hill Marias and Murias. They are not mentioned by Madras writers on the Koyas and Dorlas.

Bison-horn villages are not found on the tops of hills and isolated spurs like Hill Maria villages. They are located in positions convenient for communications, water supply or cultivation, like lowland villages in all countries. Many of them, especially in the Jagdalpur tahsil, have cart tracks leading to them, though these are used mainly by the Hindu and Mohammedan traders who bring their wares to the various weekly markets already established in their bigger villages. Though, however, some Bison-horn Marias have carts, and more keep cattle and do not always leave it to the Rawat herdsman servant to milk them, while many use ploughs, yet the majority of them still think it not the thing for Koitor to drive carts, or that they could never manage them; and there are, therefore, very many villages approachable only by footpaths. They make bridges very similar to those of the Hill Marias, often on a more elaborate scale.

**Shifting villages**

The only Bison-horn Maria village where I could find memory of a fairly recent shifting was Bare Gudra, in the Kuakonda *pargana* of Dantewara tahsil. My informant was Kartami Mukka, the old village priest (*perma*) of the village, who said that when he was young the village was settled in the now abandoned Mundi *padar* (village site); there was heavy mortality from epidemic and epizootic outbreaks for some years, and a series of crop failures. Then the eggs in his father's house began always to get addled, and his father, the *perma*, interpreting this as a final intimation that the village had to be shifted, called up the elders to see the eggs, and they agreed that the village must be shifted. They had then, on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, to go at noon with the *perma* to select the *padar* for the new village; and to test the omens at the new *padar* the *perma* dug a small hole in the ground. In the first hole he found a root growing across the hole, and so changed to another position

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria



in the same *padar*, and here he was able to dig a hole without any root growing across it; a few roots at the side of the hole did not matter, and the finding of a stone when the hole was half dug was considered lucky. In this hole he planted a pole of *saja* wood with a forked top, to one arm of which he had tied a bundle of thatching grass, and after filling in the hole around it with earth he sprinkled some grains of rice in two heaps in front of the pole in the name of the Village Mother, the clan-god and the local spirits. The next morning he came with the elders to inspect the two heaps of grain, and as he found them scattered about, he had to dig a fresh hole exactly as before, plant the *saja* pole in it, and lay two heaps of grain again in front of it. Next morning they found the two heaps undisturbed, and so considered that the omens favoured this as the village site. The *saja* pole was left there to serve as one of the supports for the roof-tree of the *perma's* house, and the building of the new village was begun without further ceremony. Had the heaps of grain been found again disturbed, they would have decided against that *padar* and tested the omens in the same way in another *padar*. A sacrifice to the Village Mother and the Earth (*Bhum*) had preceded the actual settling in the new site.

**Houses**

On page 121 are a rough sketch and ground-plan of a typical Bison-horn Maria house in the village of Telam in Kuakonda *pargana*. The inner house, consisting of the *wijja-lon* ('seed-house') in the rear, and the *narma-lon* ('middle house') in front of it, is made first; and then the *oser* ('veranda') is added, with slightly lower eaves. Though from indoors the *oser* seems just an integral part of the house, the different levels of the eaves make the house look from the outside like two card houses built on different levels. Sometimes also a second or even a third *oser* has subsequently been built on to the first, each with lower eaves, increasing still further the card house appearance. The thatch is of forest grasses or of the dwarf palms (*Phoenix sylvestris* and *Phoenix farinifera*) which are such common features of the undergrowth of the Bastar forests, and is neater than the thatch of Hill Maria houses. The doors are usually pieces of bamboo wicker-work sliding between pairs of vertical posts, like the doors of the Hill Maria houses; but sometimes the sections of wicker-work are hinged on to a doorpost by knotted pieces of split bamboo. In the richer and more advanced villages, wooden doors and padlocks are not unknown.

The *wijja-lon*, like the Hill Maria's *lonu*, is used both as a store-room and for the cult of the Departed. There being no pile granaries or long granaries, the year's harvest, not only of grain but also of forest produce, is stored in the *wijja-lon*, and so a storage platform

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria



342 of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner
251 where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of
[769] the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain; their *penda* slopes are
[432] far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

342 The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small
[513] children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *ahhi* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *uspal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc.
[473] If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interest-
[415] ing utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction
326] in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orka*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or 'wine-ladle' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process.

343 There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

422 The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria



241 to fire all the *penda* plots simultaneously, and the women take no part in this work. There is no public ceremony before the firing; but the *kasyeq-gaita* starts it for the whole village by firing the first bundle of dried brushwood in his own plot with a bundle of dried grass kindled from a glowing ember brought from his own house; he makes fire with a fire-saw only if no ember is available or if it has died on its way to the *penda*. At Handawada in May 1930, heavy rain fell, and so delayed the firing of the *penda* that the *kasyeq-gaita* and village elders went in deputation to the clan-god Verma Pen of the Gume clan at Toinar and promised to sacrifice a cock to him if he would stop the rain; he only received his cock after he had fulfilled the condition and it had been possible to fire the *penda*. The firing takes only three or four days if the wood is really dry.

241 417 Between firing and sowing there is only a short interval in which the villagers must work hard to prepare their fences and field houses. There are no fences between individual plots as a rule, these being marked off either by lines of *til* or roselle at sowing, as already explained, or by laying a few poles lengthwise along the edge of the plots; but there is a general fence around each block of plots, except where there is no risk of animals damaging the crops. A type of fencing found only around Orcha and the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana*, known as *kokor* (crooked) *garpi*, is a zig-zag stockading of logs laid horizontally on each other, the sides of each projecting angle being fifteen or twenty feet long; it looks like a vast herringbone pattern climbing the hillside. Grass *tum* fences, made in the same way as the *tum* partitions of houses already described, are used where the need for protection from animals is less, and, where bamboo is very plentiful, bamboo wattle-work fences. Another type of substantial timber fence is the *welma* fence consisting of poles laid horizontally one on another, held in position between pairs of bamboo uprights driven into the ground, and tied together at intervals between the horizontal poles; the upright bamboos are generally the two halves of a thick bamboo split lengthwise. I have not noticed in the hill villages the stockades of sal piles driven into the ground which are common among the Murias of the north and are met in Bison-horn Maria villages also.

241 342 513 [374] The chief field-house is really a sleeping platform raised high above the level of the crops on wooden piles, similar to the field watchers' *machan* found throughout Central India, but far more elaborate; the space between the piles below the platform is walled round with bamboo wicker-work or *tum*, and there is a thick thatched roof. As in the dormitories, a fire is kept burning at night below the platform to warm those sleeping on it. Tools and weapons, and cooking pots and food, are kept in the room below the platform,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria



and frequently fowls also, and dogs. From the platform radiate cords of *siari* twine to bamboo rattles hung from trees or posts in various parts of the field, to enable the occupant to scare birds or animals. It is taboo (*polo*) for women to sleep in these field-houses (*dodi*). Less elaborate sleeping or resting platforms are also made which are really cots surrounded with rough round bamboo walls; for women to cook and to rest in during the heat of the day rough conical shelters are made of bamboos and leaves, like Red Indian wigwams, known as *panambaksha*. They may also erect big and small sheds called *ketul*, consisting of thatched eaves resting on upright posts, unwalled; rough granaries for storing grain until it is removed after the harvest to the permanent granaries; and log platforms for stacking the reaped sheaves.

Sowing is begun after the first showers of the monsoon rains, in Na month. The date is fixed at a meeting of the men in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) a day or two beforehand.

**Sowing**

From the night before the sowing (*wijja'i*) till all the seeds have sprouted, it is taboo for men to cohabit with their wives, and they therefore sleep with the bachelors in the dormitory. Before sunrise on sowing day the head of each family goes to the forest and picks two *saja* leaves to serve as 'seed-leaves' (*wijj-akk*). These he brings into the *lonu* room of his house, and lays on the floor near the Pot of the Departed; he squats down before them, raises his hands, palm to palm, to his forehead, and lowers them, fists closed, to the floor in front of the leaves, saying, '*Tador-pepi mit kenjat! Miku kar kihanom, inje kenjatu, aru maki nehna nehna anam wayi! Inje ram aimatu, manemasi mantu!*' (Hearken, O Ancestors! We adjure you, hearken now, and let us have an excellent harvest! Let not your wrath now fall upon us, and be not deaf to my prayer).[1] He then hangs the two leaves from the kitchen (*angadi*) ceiling, where they remain till next seed-time, when he takes them down, and deposits them on a forest path.

On behalf of all the villagers also, the *kasyeq-gaita* makes a public offering of an egg to the Village Mother, either at her regular shrine or at some white ants' hill close to the village (not in the *penda* fields), before they go out to sow. No women may attend this ceremony.

At the first sowing they broadcast the early ripening varieties of the hill millets over about half the *penda* plots, and sow also lines of *til* or roselle to mark the limits of individual holdings. Subsequent sowings of later crops are not preceded by any ceremony.

[1] Literally, word by word, 'Ancestors, you hear! To you remembrance we make, now hear, and to-us good good harvest let-be! Now anger let-not-be, hearing abide.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria



economic disaster caused by the arbitrary stopping of their *dahi*, *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation. They said that they did not need this for profit, but to save their lives. 'They urged that if *jalapod* were allowed in a reasonable manner they would always be able to produce enough corn even in years of deficient or irregular rainfall. The men said that in the former days of *jalapod* cultivation they usually cultivated a plot for two years and then left it for five or six years, within which short period *palas*[1] and other forest growth grew high enough for them to cut and burn again.'[2]

Mirkal, Pirmeli and surrounding villages are within the orbit of Allapilli and Ahiri, and the average Maria was clearly exposed to Hindu culture contact, of which the outward sign was the wearing of coats and shorts purchased from Ahiri market or from itinerant Mahar pedlars.

The *District Gazetteer* records that the Maria house in the remoter parts of the zamindaris is occasionally very substantial, with walls formed of barked logs laid horizontally and kept in position by upright posts, the interstices being daubed with mud and the whole being thatched with jungle grass.[3] There still are many substantial huts in the villages between Allapilli and Lahiri, but I formed the impression that the standard of housing had deteriorated, possibly because of stricter regulation of felling of trees for domestic purposes.

On the twenty-three miles drive from Pirmeli to Bhamragarh we passed several villages rich in toddy palms, and often saw Marias climbing the tree trunks by rough 'ladders' lashed to the trunks consisting of bamboo stems with the stumps of their side-shoots cut short to act as rungs. The climbers carry, slung round their waist and hanging down like tails, thick bamboo tubes to catch the tapped juice, as described on page 168, sometimes also they take up big gourd bottles. The Provincial Government has for a long time pursued a wiser excise policy in South Chanda than in other tribal areas, of allowing Marias free tree-tapping licences for domestic consumption in certain scheduled villages. The licences are valid for three years and the number of trees that may be tapped is restricted according to the population of the village and the number of trees available for tapping. This applies in much of the Maria country to the *caryotis urens* or sago-palm, the juice of which, as in Bastar, is much preferred to that of the ordinary toddy palm. This privilege had been accorded only to 239 villages of Sironcha tahsil and 58 of Garchiroli tahsil. The selection of villages had been somewhat eclectic; some large villages with only a small Maria or

[1] *Butea frondosa*.
[2] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 185.
[3] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 202.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

*CHAPTER TWO*

# THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

## I. The Muria Village

BEFORE approaching the main subject of this book, it is necessary to see how the chelik and motiari live at home. In a sense, there is no such thing as a typical Muria village any more than there is a typical Muria house. But most of the villages conform to the Gond pattern: they are set among trees—the Muria seem fonder of shade than wind and do not often choose the hill-tops beloved of the Maria and Baiga—and each house is enclosed within a separate fence that also surrounds its garden. There is thus a sharp distinction between a Muria and a Hill Maria village: the latter, like the Baiga village, consists of a row of houses joined together and opening on to a common street. Traces of this survive among the Muria in the enclosures of some of their leading men; at Markabera, for example, the headman's house is like a little village, a long enclosure with a small street on to which face many dwelling-places and granaries. In Palli-Barkot, and other western villages also, groups of related families build their houses to open round a square.

But generally the houses are scattered about, sometimes widely scattered, to suit the lie of the land and the dimensions of the gardens, and a street connects them with each other. There is no sociological significance in the layout of the village; neither the headman's nor the priest's houses nor the ghotul are ever in a special or recognized position.

The houses, nearly always two or three in number round a small courtyard, are built of timber or bamboo plastered with mud and have thatched roofs. As we move east we find the verandahs getting deeper and deeper until in the east of Kondagaon the verandah of the main house is often deeper than the room inside. Where houses are built like this, there is no need for special menstruation huts, which are indeed only to be found in the west in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar, where there is no room to seclude a woman on the small verandahs.

To visit a Muria village is to receive a general impression of tidiness and cleanness, careful industry that exploits to the full the gifts of Mother Earth, and a love of animals. The pigsties are substantial, often with a double roof; the cattle-sheds are sometimes raised on pillars; sitting hens are given comfortable nests raised well above the ground. The houses themselves are cosy and homely, crammed with every sort of basket, leaf-bundle and utensil. Fish-traps, drums, wooden clogs hang from the roof, and flutes and bows and arrows are stuck under the thatch. Inside, in an inner room, is kept the mysterious Pot of the Departed where the family's ancestors are tended and placated.

These houses are the work-rooms of the chelik and motiari; they are the homes only of the married. The life and interest of chelik and motiari centre in the ghotul. But life there is definitely regarded as a preparation and training for the home. Those who live well and work hard in the dormitories will be good husbands and wives, fathers and mothers later on.

Most of the Muria are undoubtedly very poor. I was one day discussing with W. V. Grigson, who had visited Mandla after several years in Bastar, whether the Bastar villagers were poorer than those in the Central Provinces. I suggested—and he agreed—that probably the Bastar villagers were actually poorer, but that their lives were so much richer that they seemed far more

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A N32 Gond A W32
Muria

## THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

### *The Field-houses*

In many places, regular field-houses (*hetul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brushwood
*Length 3' 9"*

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

### *Permanent Cultivation*

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the fields'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchodar*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond
Oraon AW39



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ABOVE: Uraon village elephant of Saparam

BELOW: Uraon dhumkuria at Borbambey

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[p. 224 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria



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Hill Maria boys in front of the Ituinar ghotul

Bison-horn Maria girls in the court of the Dugeli ghotul

[p.254(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TEN

# THE GHOTUL BUILDINGS

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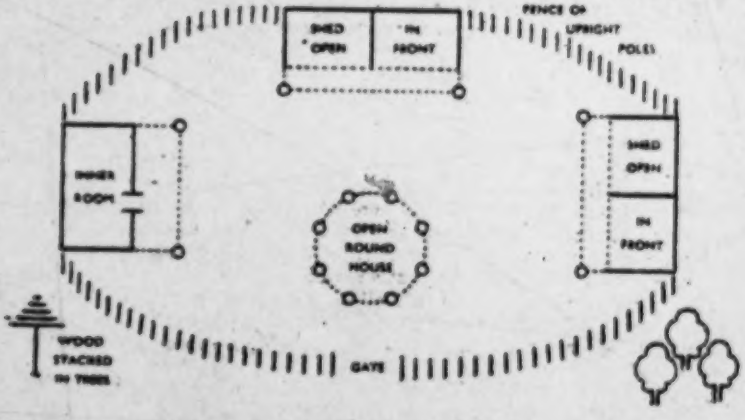
THE position and architecture of the ghotul is largely determined by one simple fact. In every village in Bastar, as we have seen, the people have to build and maintain a hut for the use of travellers and touring officials. This is an excellent arrangement: it prevents the invasion of aboriginal homes by outsiders, and it means that in every village there is some clean and roomy place where disputes can be settled and official business transacted. This Paik-ghotul or Thana-gudi, as it is called, is supposed to be separate from the Koitur-ghotul or Ghotul-gudi, the club of the boys and girls, and in some Muria villages it is. But in many others the elders of the village seem to have decided that it would save them a great deal of trouble if they combined the Paik-ghotul and the Koitur-ghotul in one compound. It would take up less room, means less building, and the young men would be always there to do the work. I have already quoted some Muria elders as saying that this was actually how the ghotul originated. If the young men were kept together in one place they would always be ready to serve visitors and could hand over their house to them for the night. This situation is of course comparatively modern. Old Muria like Yogi and Bindo remember the day when there was no revenue staff and they never saw a touring officer.




DANCING-GROUND
The Markabera Ghotul
(See p. 327)

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The original ghotul, then, was probably a small building on the outskirts of the village, among trees, perhaps originally in some sacred grove, aloof from the public eye, with a small secret door. You may still see this kind of ghotul in predominantly Hindu villages and in parts of Kondagaon, at Realnar and Sonawal, for example, in the south, and Kerawahi, Majhlboran, Lihagaon in the north. But there is no rule. Near the eastern boundary, there was a small ghotul at Baghbera, and a combined Thana-gudi and Koitur-ghotul at the neighbouring Ulera. Where a village consists, administratively,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

*Plate LXVI*

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The Palli ghotul

[p. 326 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

## THE GHOTUL BUILDINGS

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of several hamlets, there will probably be a large ghotul in the main village (where officials usually halt) and small ones in the hamlets.

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In all such villages there is a separate building in the middle of the village for officials. In Masora, for example, there was a large Thana-gudi inside the village, and away on the outskirts, among trees, is a small hut with a fenced compound in front. This is the home of the chelik and motiari. In Baniagaon, a predominantly Hindu village with a school, the ghotul is similarly separated from the officials' halting-place, and is a single building with a small door facing away from the village towards the forest. In Kachora, near by, you may see the same type of ghotul, even further removed from the ordinary dwelling-places of the village, beyond the shrine of the Village Mother, perhaps because an aggressive Brahmin lives there and tries to dominate the Muria. I obviously cannot give a list of all such villages, though there are not very many of them. In the Chalka Pargana, I think of Kajen, Naria and Maranar as places where the Thana-gudi was separate from the ghotul. In such villages there is sometimes not even a fence to isolate the compound; that is not necessary, forest and field keep the children separate from the world. But in all there is a small secret door, a hatch which you have to bend down to and climb over—not unlike the door by which Alice entered Wonderland.

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But, as I have said, in the majority of Muria villages the Thana-gudi is combined with the Koitur-ghotul, and this influences both its plan and its location. Officials will not want to camp outside the village in the jungle; they will need a hut for their horses, and accommodation for servants. And so we get the large ghotul with its spacious compound, standing in the very heart of the village, which is familiar to every touring officer in the north of Bastar. This arrangement is unsatisfactory and was never contemplated by the Administration. Into the very heart of Muria life is injected the all-too-often poisonous contact of every casual wanderer. There is a type of touring subordinate who makes a point of halting in ghotul where it is known that there are pretty motiari and pesters the chelik to pimp for them—which to their honour, be it said, they never do. Contractors for myrabolams or tendu leaves camp for days in the ghotul, making it impossible for the boys and girls to live their normal lives. I once found an opium-seller permanently established in a ghotul with his wife, thus outraging the fundamental Muria rule that the presence of a married woman there is an offence to Lingo Pen. He was removed at once by the Administrator, but Bastar is a big place and it is impossible to say in how many other places the integrity of the ghotul is thus destroyed. This is, of course, the Muria's own fault. It is due to the slackness and selfishness of the older men who want the youngsters to do all the work. It is thus difficult to do anything about it.

Let us examine some of the villages which have ghotul of this type. Often, so long as there are no visitors, the enlarged ghotul is all to the advantage of the boys and girls. In Markabera, for example, chelik and motiari have in all five different sleeping-places and a spacious compound. The house with the very deep verandah is, of course, the original ghotul and the other buildings have developed from it to meet the pressure of outside visitations. But the extra room thus provided and the open sheds available as dormitories are a boon to the children's health. The one-room ghotul with its tiny door and no windows and its crowded floor, its stuffy smoky atmosphere, cannot be good for anyone.

Fortunately—from this point of view—the larger type of ghotul is far the most common. This model with its central house with deep verandah, spacious inner room, large door, open hut for conference or sleep in the hot

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Maria



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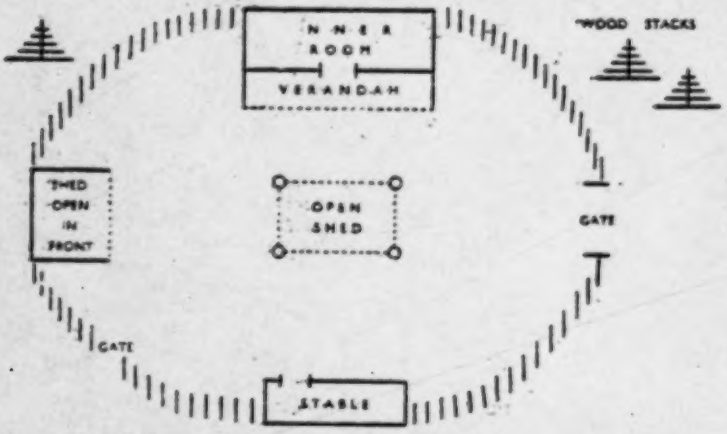
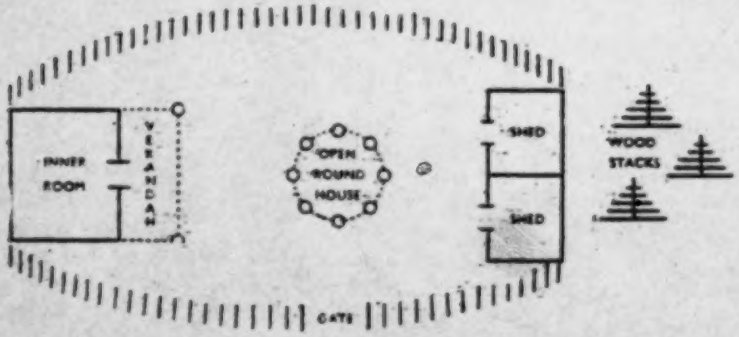
weather, and several small sheds, the whole surrounded by a fence, may be seen in scores of Muria villages. There is the same arrangement at Bandopal, at Ulera, at Amgaon, at Jhakri, at Almer, at More Berma. This is the plan of the ghotul at Almer in the Bara Dongar Pargana:




This ghotul stands in the middle of the village, in a grove of tamarind trees.

In a third type of ghotul, its position in the middle of the village is possibly due to Maria influence. The traditional Maria ghotul is the centre of the male life of the village. The men assemble there in the evenings, and talk, smoke, drink and sleep. But girls do not normally attend. In villages like Palli Barkot, Watia, Phulpar, Koilibera, on the fringe of the Abujhmar Maria country, the ghotul is in the heart of the village; it is generally (except at Koilibera) not so spacious as those we have been considering. The plan below of the ghotul at Palli Barkot is typical.




These ghotul are often beautifully kept. At Khutgaon, there is a spotlessly clean compound forty paces square; in it are three open sheds, one with a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

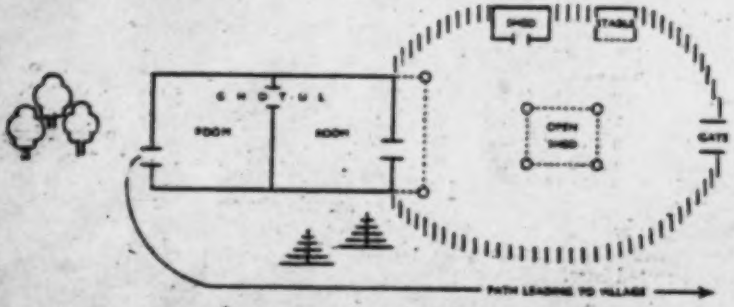
## THE GHOTUL BUILDINGS

finely-constructed round roof, and two large houses with thick mud walls. One of these is the Thana-gudi, the other has an inner and an outer room for the boys and girls. The Telenga, Temrugaon and Chureng ghotul are of the same pattern, like Palli Barkot; a big house with a small or deep verandah, a central open hut with often a rounded roof and two small open sheds, the whole surrounded by a high wooden fence.

In the north of the State, on the Amabera plateau and generally to the north of the forest road from Berma to Antagarh and up to the Kanker border are to be found the least attractive ghotul—and ghotul members—in Bastar. The buildings are mean, dilapidated and draughty. The dormitory actually used by the boys and girls rarely has a door and thus loses its intimacy and cosiness. My memories of Pupgaon, Chikhli, even Penjori, are not happy.

It remains to mention a few special dormitories. Semurgaon is traditionally the site of the first ghotul, built there by Lingo himself. He could hardly have chosen a lonelier or more charming spot. But the ghotul today is small and almost unique in having unplastered walls made of bare logs. On a pillar in the centre are carvings of chelik and motiari, horses and combs. From the door you look out over a wild expanse of forest and *dippa* clearings.

No visitor to Nayanar can ever forget the ghotul there—the long building with its little windows and two doors, at one end like a hatch, at the other large and dignified, its carved pillars, its charming site at the edge of the village among great trees. This is its general plan—




One of the most delightful and original of all the ghotul is at the Budakasa Para of Malakot. Here outside the village, in the woods, shadowed by tall sago-palms, is a house lifted well above the ground on pillars eight feet high. Above the wooden floor is a low wall two feet high all round, then an open space to the roof. This platform is reached by a ladder. Both the upper room and the space below it are used; there are fires kept burning in each.

The ghotul is built by the chelik themselves, though the boys often get the help of the older men by promising to help in their fields at sowing-time or harvest. The motiari bring grass for the roof, stones and earth for the floor and, when the walls are ready, plaster them with mud. Before they begin the work, the boys mark out on the ground the proposed plan of the building and put there a little pile of rice covered with a leaf-cup. They leave it all night and in the morning go to examine it, sometimes only for one day, sometimes for three days running. Should the rice be scattered, it is taken as a bad omen and they build the ghotul elsewhere. But if the rice remains just

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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as it was under its leaf-cup, they proceed to dig holes to take the four corner pillars of the house. If, as they dig, they come across white ants they move the site. They put four pillars into the holes and tie a garland of mango leaves round them. After this they proceed to build in the usual way.

At Phunder the boys put a grass 'top-knot' on the roof and a small flag, the *chelik-bairag* or Palo Pen, so that 'all might know it was a ghotul'.

Such are the main types of building; what of the decorations and the furniture? These vary greatly from place to place. They are least ornate to the north and east, most carefully imagined and executed in the west central parganas, in the typical Jhoria area.

Doors are sometimes very small, sometimes large and heavy, occasionally of light bamboo, sometimes carved as at Bandopal; sometimes there is no door at all. Often there is an arrangement for shutting the door from inside—a latch falls into a wooden hook attached to the door. But it is interesting that there is no means of shutting the house from outside: the ghotul is never locked up. It is a shrine and no one would steal from it.

As you move west across the centre of the Muria country you find more, and more elaborate carving. The ghotul has stimulated artistic creation, not only in the realm of personal adornment but also in wall-painting and wood-carving. The chelik desire that their ghotul really should be 'lovely as a bison's horns'. In many of the Jhoria ghotul there are excellently carved pillars. These may be seen at Almer, Nayanar, Remawand, Amgaon, Bandopal, Malinar, Kober and elsewhere. At Almer, one of the pillars has siddari birds at the top, another has tortoises. On the body of the pillars are carvings of the moon, boys and girls dancing the Hulki, elephants. Down the pillar there are three *pidha*, the seats that are supposed to hold it up. At Amgaon also, each of the pillars has four of these *pidha* 'for the roof to sit on'. At Nayanar, one of the pillars is decorated with tortoises and another has hooded snakes projecting from all four corners. In Malinar, there are carvings on all the pillars—combs beautifully fashioned, a boy with a large phallus, a realistic bow and arrow, a snake. Outside, as at Remawand, there are pillars in the fence with remarkable designs clearly illustrated in Plate LXXII. At Jhakri I saw a fine pillar ingeniously carved to make a wooden ball inside with no way of putting it in or taking it out. At Binjhe too the Sirdar had carved some good pillars and had made windows in the ghotul with serrated bars.

Phallic symbols are very common.[1] In nearly every ghotul there is somewhere the representation of the vagina, often about two feet from the ground

[1] Similar phallic symbols occur in the Juang and Bhuiya and in some Uraon dormitories. The Juang often make a row of breasts right across the main beam of the roof. So do the Kond. Hatton describes carvings of men and women 'in a condition of sexual excitement' in Naga *morung*.—Hutton, *Diaries*, op. cit., p. 48.

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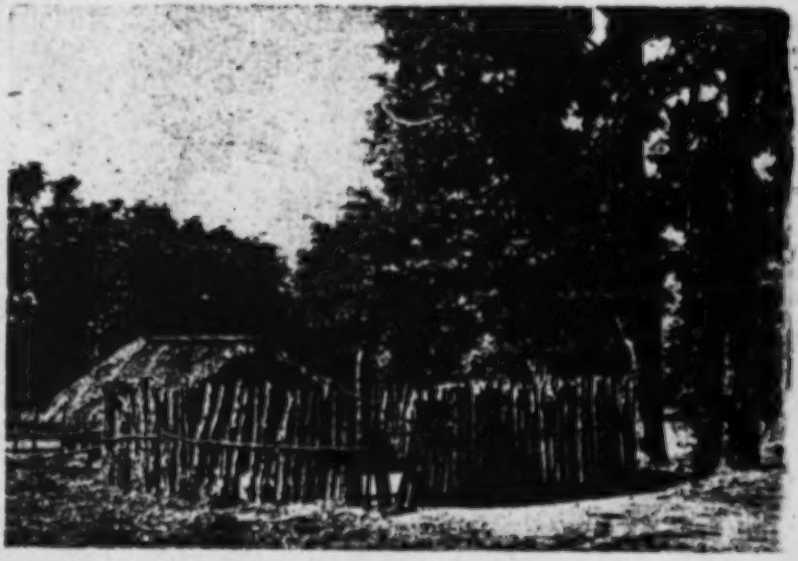
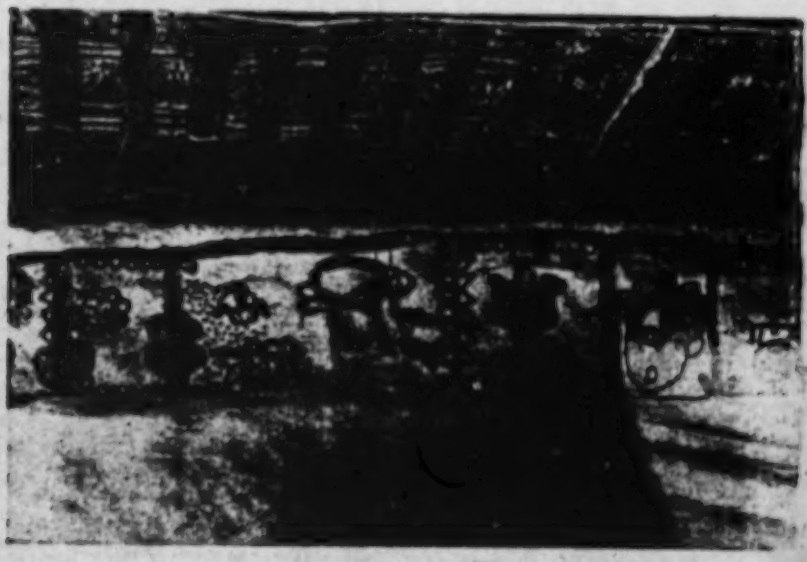
*Plate LXVIII*



The ghotul at Mason

Black and red wall-paintings in the More Berma ghotul

X 883
353
532



2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria



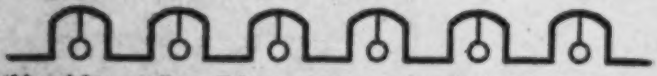
883 X
342
353
531
831

on the central pillar. In the small Kolur ghotul there is one slender pillar covered with carvings of the vagina, as always showing the clitoris, but here there was a double clitoris and a clitoris upside down.

At Markabera there were similar carvings of the vagina with the clitoris.

Often a chelik may be seen with an enormous penis, a motiari in his arms. The boys say that these carvings are very useful as an approach to girls. It may be that the vagina in the central pillar is the relic of a custom now forgotten of initiating smaller boys by pressing them against it.[1]

The walls of the ghotul are often decorated with drawings and paintings. In 1940 there was a fine display in the Remawand ghotul. The following year I saw a frieze of fantastic paintings (illustrated in Plate LXVIII) at Mote Berma. At Netagaon there were models of motiari, tigers and a monkey. In Urdabera there was a model of a chelik with his motiari, and over the door a mud model of a horse. In Deogaon, there were modellings of a chelik and motiari riding on a horse. At Kuntpadar, one wall was well decorated with drawings of a boy, a vagina, a girl, a bow and arrow and the sun and moon. At Palki there was the representation of a bird trap:



But this might equally well be a sexual symbol, similar to the design of the phallus within the vagina that I noted at Metawand:

883 X
352
[531]

The day-time visitor to a ghotul will find little enough there by way of furniture. Cots are never used; everyone sleeps on the ground. Seats and stools are rare, but in many ghotul are to be found long narrow pieces of wood raised some two inches from the ground. These are the *katul* which may be used either as seats or pillows. Some are very long and suggest the custom of several boys and girls sleeping together. They are often carved with geometric designs, figures of boys and girls, crude representations of the vagina. I have one with four breasts carved on its under-side. Occasionally you may see a *katul* with a little drawer hollowed out below for storing necklaces or other ornaments during the night. As far as I know these head-rests are the corporate property

FIG. 54. *Katul* from Talabera showing small drawer for keeping ornaments. *Length 1' 7"*

[1] A remarkable parallel from an English Public School (Repton) is provided in Denton Welch's *Maiden Voyage* (London, 1943), p. 42. The author is describing the House dormitory. 'Two lips had been painted on one of the beams and all new boys had to

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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291

Phirta, the Chowkidar of the Maseora ghotul

*Plate LXIX*

The ghotul near Malakot

[P.338(N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883 342

*Plate LXX*

The Baghhera

The Bandogal ghotul

[417]

[p. 338 (R)]

531
342

Carved pillar at
Chandabera

*Plate LXXII*

Carved pillar at
Remawand

[p.350(R)]

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A Lohar boy: the Chowkidar of the Berma ghotul

*Plate LXXVI*

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356

Jootiari cleaning the Rondepal ghotul

[p. 364 (B)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria



times in a little house of their own, sometimes in a room lent to them by an old widow. Where there is a separate hut, this is sometimes also used for the segregation of menstruating women. In a few places there are special buildings for this purpose. The houses of the headmen are not built in any special position, but those of the Siraha medicine-men can generally be distinguished by the little huts for patients which are built round them. On the outskirts of the village will be found the shrine of the Village Mother, and in a grove nearby there may be the temple of one of the clan-gods. Beyond is the village burial place and cremation ground. Rows of menhirs in memory of the Dead may be seen in the majority of villages.

There is no standard pattern for the Maria house any more than there is for the Maria village. Most of the houses consist of three rooms, each a separate building with eaves at different levels, which make them look, as Grigson says, 'like card houses'. The first room, which is really a built-in verandah, is the kitchen. It leads into a bedroom and this in turn opens into an inner and secret room mostly occupied by a platform for storing grain and other possessions; in one corner is the Pot of the Departed about which centres the Maria cult of the Ancestors. Frequently two or more such houses are built round a courtyard, part of which is occupied by a more or less open building where people sit to talk and work.

Maria women's dancing-stick (3½' long)

The houses are generally clean and pleasant, but littered with a great variety of domestic and agricultural impediments. Outside are the pig-styes and cattle-sheds,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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342
291
142
301

*Girls threshing grain with their feet at Mokhpal*

[FACING p. 14]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

342
854
516

*Oyami Masa with family on the scene of the death of the younger wife*

142
301
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*Oyami Masa with his surviving wife*

[Facing p. 15]